



## Quarterly Commission Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2021

10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### Locations

Virtual Meeting Via WebEx

### Virtual Meeting Credentials:

*Provided in Meeting Invitation or contact Danielle Kyle to get link at [danielle.kyle@illinois.gov](mailto:danielle.kyle@illinois.gov)*

**Commissioners Present:** Furlett, Natalie; Chavkin, Nisan; Irwin, Jen; Johnson, Marci; Long, Shelley; Clarke, Scott; Dixon, James; Davis, Laura; Drumgoole, Rosie (proxy for Meyers, Jenne); Mathis, Tiffany; Schuman, Anne; North, Jennifer; Holmes, Tiffany; Leonis, Catherine; Dietkus, Rachael; Copeland, Ami; Angeloni, Alison; Peace, Curtis; Fernandez, Andrew; Roberts, Carolyn; Hayman, Bridget; Rueff, Amy; Geenen, Dave; and Sims, Cynthia.

**Staff/Foundation Present:** Samuels, Ayoka; Kyle, Danielle, Starling, Claire; Pendergrass, Karen; Haynes, Senyah; McNeil, Cassie; Lomelino, Jordan; Davis, Dawn; and Bodor, Brandon.

**Invited Guests:** Ballestros, Juana and Gruber, Curt.

**Members of the Public Present:** Gilbert, Ajiah; Nelson, Ashli; Segura, Cynthia; Simon, Elaine; Robertson, Kelsie; Hayden, Kristen; Engel, Liam; Grimaldi, Natalie; Murray, Tessa; Alex; and Oas, Robyn.

### Pre Meeting Materials

Commissioner Onboarding Deck  
State Service Plan (Draft)  
Basecamp how-to user video links

### Minutes

1. Call to Order
  - i. Natalie Furlett called the meeting to order at 10:03
2. Roll Call
  - i. Commissioners, please type in your name in the chat. Both the minutes and commissioner attendance will be recorded by Starling.
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
  - i. Furlett noted that all commissioners should have reviewed the minutes from the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting prior to today's board meeting. They were also made available in Basecamp.
  - ii. Schuman motioned to approve the minutes and Copeland seconded. All in favor, motion passed.
4. Introduction of new commissioners
  - i. Samuels welcomed our new commissioners to the board.
  - ii. New members include the following: David Christensen, Curtis Peace, Carolyn Roberts, Andrew Fernandez, Bridget Hayman, and Amy Rueff. Welcome all!
  - iii. We will have a few more people joining as new commissioners in the upcoming weeks, stay tuned for updates.

5. IDPH Vaccine Ambassadors
  - i. Juana Ballestros, Manager, Community Public Health Outreach, gave a brief overview and presentation of the Illinois COVID-19 Ambassador program. IDPH is calling on all Illinoisans to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and share crucial information about COVID-19 as volunteer community ambassadors. Sign up if you haven't already! Ambassadors are already representing all 102 Illinois counties, but there is still room for more!
  - ii. More information about the program is available on the IDPH website. An email with information and links necessary to sign up will be sent out soon to commissioners and will be made available on Basecamp.
6. AmeriCorps Agency Updates
  - i. Irwin gave an update on the AmeriCorps Agency. Irwin noted that the White House is still in the process of identifying a potential CEO, and they have also nominated three potential board members for AmeriCorps with more nominations to come.
  - ii. No updates on the American Rescue Plan at this time. Each of the programs in the agency has submitted their spend plan to the Office of Management and Budget and are awaiting approval for the plans. Once approved, that information will be further communicated.
    - a. There is an expectation to increase AmeriCorps member living allowance and funds will also be used to make service more accessible and inclusive by increasing diversity, cultural experiences, and the number of AmeriCorps members in communities. There is a page on the website with posted updates as well.
  - iii. Irwin highlighted the Civilian Climate Corps as well and how our programming intersects with the notion of a Civilian Climate Corps. More information is available on the AmeriCorps website as well.
  - iv. The agency has been embarking on developing a strategic planning process as well. This will be updated and they anticipate it will be ready February 2022. Right now, they are in the stage of collecting information through engagement sessions with stakeholders.
    - a. There has been 8 sessions so far with each state commission and these are being held by region. They are also holding sessions with other programs, such as AmeriCorps Seniors and AmeriCorps VISTA program sponsors. The next phase will engage other stakeholders, likely commissioners. More information will be forthcoming. These sessions may be starting in June or July.
  - v. The Midwest regional office is hiring more staff, 3 new portfolio managers and a senior portfolio manager, which will increase the capacity of their office.
  - vi. Irwin briefly went over AmeriCorps VISTA awarding and expansions as well. Recently, they just awarded a new VISTA project to South Suburban Community Services. They will be recruiting for six members and will be focusing on workforce development. They will be starting toward the end of the summer, likely August.
    - a. They also have increased the capacity of the Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics. They have expanded their summer associate cohort so they can have more resources to focus on vaccine support and education.
  - vii. Additionally, the AmeriCorps VISTA concept paper last round for fiscal year of 21 is due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. If any organizations are interested, please reach out to Jen Irwin. The next concept paper date will happen in October and that will be for projects in FY 22.
7. Serve Illinois Foundation report
  - i. Foundation President Bodor gave an update on the Serve Illinois Foundation. Currently, the foundation has six board members and are looking to expand, likely to at least seven members in order to avoid a tie in any voting instances. The by-laws call for 7-13 members.
  - ii. In terms of IRS review and examination, we have submitted everything necessary and are just waiting to hear back.
  - iii. The foundation has also signed an agreement with Perkins Coie Law Firm, who will be providing support to the commission.
    - a. There was a question in the chat regarding the foundation by-laws and whether or not they specify a number ratio of commissioners versus non-commissioners.

Bodor noted that at least half of the foundation board must also be commissioners.

- b. Chavkin asked that if it was possible to have by the next commission meeting a profile of the kind of commissioners that the foundation is seeking and a process by which nominations can be submitted. Bodor noted that this would be a good idea and accomplishable with that timeline.
- c. Mathis had a question regarding how the commission can receive funds from the foundation, noting that there has been issues previously with the overall approval process. She suggested that there needs to be clearer guidelines in terms of what the foundation's money is and what has been given to the foundation for holding onto. Bodor noted that they are working on these guidelines currently and making sure to keep funds separate and organized with various subaccounts. Funds are no longer being commingled.
- d. Samuels pointed out that we have been in works with IDPH legal to make sure that we have a very comprehensive MOU. This will talk about what the foundation does and who it serves.

## 8. Committee Reports

### a. Executive Committee (Commissioner Retreat: Starved Rock, September 2021)

1. Chavkin noted that the executive committee would like to discuss the tradition of bringing back the commissioner retreat at this time. The retreat was unable to happen last year due to COVID-19.
2. This year, we want to focus on working together and convening the last week of September moving slightly into the first week of October at Starved Rock. Commissioners will be reimbursed for travel and the lodging will be covered as well.
3. Please block these dates out for now, which would be Sept. 29-Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. The dates will be confirmed at a later time with approval for gatherings and in person accommodations at Starved Rock.

### b. AmeriCorps Committee

1. Davis gave an overview of the AmeriCorps committee. The committee is currently working on recommendations for FY 21 funding. A special meeting is coming up on June 2<sup>nd</sup> on the topic. An invitation has already been sent out to commissioners, please reach out if you did not receive one.
2. The committee is also assessing the current grant applications with an evaluation matrix that is being constantly adjusted in order to better capture the priorities of AmeriCorps and Serve Illinois in a given year (improving equity, diversity, and inclusion). Additionally, the committee is working to improve efficiently and reduce the complexity of the process to make it more transparent and objective.

### c. Strategic Planning (State Service Plan)

1. Copeland shared a PowerPoint going over the mission and vision of Strategic Planning committee and the Illinois State Service Plan, which details the goals and progress of the committee through various metrics.

### d. Recognition

1. Mathis noted that our recognition events include the Governor's Hometown Awards and the Volunteer Governor's Service Awards. Both of these events work to highlight the great work of volunteers and communities working together across the state.
2. During these times, applications are coming in and the committee is focusing on continuing to update and look at the application process to make sure it is clear and is reflective of what we are asking of our applicants.
3. Social media has been a great reflection of this celebration of our volunteers and we have had an increase in commission interest because of these posts. Additionally, this representation is necessary for who we are and what we do. Bodor noted that our recognition events are also great for bringing in corporate sponsorships as well and solicit private funds to amplify the work of the commission.

### e. Public Policy

1. Furlett noted this is a new committee, and it was voted into creation at the last commissioner's retreat in 2019 and is starting now.
2. This committee is a great opportunity for us to think about how we leverage our support from local officials in order to raise the profile of volunteerism in Illinois. If anyone is

- interested, please join the committee, as it needs more members.
3. The committee will monitor what is going on in Springfield in order to keep us informed and to help guide our actions. The committee, headed by Steve Solomon, will also support both the staff and the commission.
- f. Governance and Finance
1. Clarke stated that the committee has met recently on a few different occasions to discuss various ways to improve operations of the commission.
  2. Items discussed at these meetings included an increase in training for staff and members on the open meetings act and ethics laws, improve documentations of meetings and commission activities, recommendations on improvements of internal routines and controls of the foundation, and discussion of budget and staffing levels of the commission.
  3. In upcoming meetings, they will focus on the transition to in-person meetings, review by-laws for possible changes (the committee is required to review the by-laws every 2 years), and orientation for new commissioners.
- g. Public Relations (Paul Gregory Media Branding Presentation)- Cathy Leonis
1. Leonis noted that we have been working with PGM to assist with social media work in recruitment and engaging in rebranding the commission and Serve Illinois. We want Serve Illinois to be a household name!
  2. Curt Gruber, brand strategist with PGM, gave a brief overview of our partnership with the company. Gruber noted they have been working on developing our brand and elevating the profile of volunteerism in the State of Illinois. PGM conducted interviews to gauge perspectives at both the local and national level. We are looking to implement the following: Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Implementation Statement, Defined Brand Archetypes, Defined Brand Pillars, a Positioning Statement, and a Promotional Tagline.
    - a. Serve Illinois Tagline- Addressing Needs, Connecting Neighbors, and Advancing Together.
    - b. PDF information regarding the above information is available on Basecamp under "Meeting Docs".
9. Executive Director Report
- i. Samuels gave a brief report on our current staffing structure. Our colleague Michelle Hanneken is still on extended leave through at least September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
    - a. Additionally, our training coordinator position has been posted. This position will be in Springfield.
    - b. The commission also has a vacancy available for a program officer, which will hopefully be positioned in Chicago. More information to come.
  - ii. Both Senyah Haynes and Cassie McNeil are assisting us in terms of board support and marketing, social media, and website support.
    - a. Additionally, we are also looking to have two contractors through IDPH to assist with fiscal operations, and two ASC interns if we are funded, to assist with data management and performance reporting.
    - b. We also have a volunteer services coordinator position available that will work with managing strategic partnership and volunteer opportunities throughout the state.
  - iii. Samuels gave a brief overview of the recent Governor's Hometown Awards event, and noted that we have dramatically increased our media coverage on the event for this year. For the Governor's Service Volunteer Awards, we are looking to have the event on November 10<sup>th</sup>, but need to look at event availability for the time. The event will be in Springfield.
  - iv. The commission does plan to apply for the AmeriCorps VISTA program for the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. We are interested in having a hub site for AmeriCorps VISTA in the state of Illinois. Also, we are looking to get our final numbers for competitive level funding. By the time we have our June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, we will have that information made available.
    - a. We are planning on having a Program Director's Launch in July 2021 and the National Service Opening Day on October 19<sup>th</sup> in Springfield.
    - b. Additionally, Samuels is working to meet commissioners in person as time

allows with vaccinations efforts.

10. Basecamp Q&A based on pre-meeting materials

- i. This item has been moved in order to allow ample time for public comment.

11. Public Comment

- i. Both Ajiah Gilbert and Alex are here for public comment with the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus and the Village of Park Forest. They have shared a handout with commissioners as well with the timeline of events for the dispute.
- ii. They have both requested that commissioners to give an explanation as to why their AmeriCorps contract was not upheld and revoked funding by no longer working with MMC. They would ideally like their AmeriCorps status reinstated and their promised Education Award. They would appreciate a formal apology as well and for rescinding the offer of their AmeriCorps status. They would also like a formal apology to each of the municipalities that have lost service and money through this program. Their GoFundMe was shared in the chat as well.
- iii. Furllett thanked both individuals for their service to AmeriCorps and their communities. At the time, given the pending legal issues the commission is not in a position to respond. When the commission is in that position however, they hope to have a conversation.

12. Adjourn

- i. Furllett asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Leonis motioned to adjourn and Mathis seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

---

*Improving Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the State.*

